

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01

/057 W

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R 061015Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 706

INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

:CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

COMUSJAPAN, YOKOTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TOKYO 7575

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, JA

SUBJ: LDP LIKELY TO PROFIT FROM OPPOSITION DISUNITY

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SUMMARY. OPPOSITION PARTIES HAVE FAILED TO DEMONSTRATE ABILITY TO  
3NGAGE IN ELECTORAL OR OTHER COOPERATIVE EFFORTS NECESSARY TO TOPPLE  
LDP FROM POWER. MOREOVER, EVEN SHOULD LDP LOSE ITS PARLIAMENTARY  
MAJORITY, WE DO NOT THINK OPPOSITION PARTIES COULD PUT TOGETHER  
COALITION GOVERNMENT. IN THAT EVENT, LDP WOULD PROBABLY ESTABLISH  
COALITION OR WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH DSP AND KOMEITO THEREBY  
ASSURING CONTINUED CONSERVATIVE DOMINANCE OF JAPANESE GOVERNMENT.  
END SUMMARY.

1. BELIEF PERSISTS AMONG SOME POLITICAL OBSERVERS AND SOME--  
VERY FEW WE THINK--PARTY POLSTICIANS THAT OPPOSITION PARTY  
DIFFERENCES CAN AND SHOULD BE SUBORDINATED TO COMMON  
PURPOSE OF OUSTING LDP FROM POWER. AND, QUESTION OF WHETHER OR  
NOT SOME OR ALL OPPOSITION PARTIES CAN COMBINE FORCES FIRST TO  
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CAPTURE DIET MAJORITY AND THEN FORCE COALITION GOVERNMENT CON-  
TINUES TO INTRIGUE BOTH FOREIGN AND JAPANESE ANALYSTS. THIS  
LINE OF ANALYSIS HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY RECURRENT THROUGHOUT THIS  
SPRING'S ELECTION CAMPAIGNS AND HAS CROPPED UP TIME AND AGAIN IN

THE QUESTIONS PUT TO US BY VISITING AMERICAN COLUMNISTS, CORRESPONDENTS AND SCHOLARS IN THE LAST FEW WEEKS. EMBASSY'S CURRENT VIEW OF OPPOSITION'S PROSPECTS FOR TAKEOVER IN RESPONSE TO SUCH QUESTIONS MAY BE OF INTEREST TO THE DEPARTMENT.

2. COALITION CONCEPTIONS: OPPOSITION PARTIES REMAIN DIVIDED AND MUTUALLY COMPETITIVE, EVEN IN THEIR CONCEPTION OF FUTURE COALITION GOVERNMENT. ONLY JSP IS COMMITTED TO NOTION OF 4-PARTY GRAND ALLIANCE (JSP-JCP-KOMEITO-DSP). BUT ITS OFFICIAL POSITION NOTWITHSTANDING, JSP IS STILL CAUGHT UP IN INTRA-PARTY DEBATE BETWEEN ELEMENTS FAVORING TIE-UP WITH JCP ONLY AND THOSE URGING JSP-KOMEITO-DSP COMBINATION. COMMUNISTS VIEW JSP AS PROSPECTIVE COALITION PARTNER (TOLERATING KOMEITO AS KIND OF APPENDAGE), BUT WANT NOTHING TO DO WITH DSP. KOMEITO OSTENSIBLY SUPPORTS ALLIANCE WITH JSP AND DSP, BUT IN FACT THINKS THAT THOSE PARTIES ENROUTE TO EXTINCTION AND FUTURE WILL INVOLVE 3-WAY STRUGGLE BETWEEN ITSELF, LDP AND JCP. FINALLY, STaunchLY ANTI-COMMUNIST DSP, WHICH PREVIOUSLY ADVOCATED TIES WITH JSP AND KOMEITO, HAS RECENTLY ADOPTED POLICY LEANING MORE TOWARDS FUTURE COOPERATION WITH CONSERVATIVES. IN SUM, THERE IS NO CONSENSUS EVEN ON COMPOSITION OF FUTURE COALITION (LET ALONG ON OBJECTIVES OR POLICIES). CLEARLY, HOWEVER, ANY ARRANGEMENT WHICH WOULD INVOLVE DSP OR KOMEITO IN COMBINATION WITH COMMUNISTS IS ALMOST INCONCEIVABLE.

3. ELECTORAL COOPERATION: MUCH HAS BEEN MADE OF FACT THAT THROUGH ELECTORAL COOPERATION IN RECENT YEARS, OPPOSITION PARTIES COLLECTIVELY HAVE SUCCEEDED IN INSTALLING "REFORMIST" GOVERNORS AND MAYORS IN INCREASING NUMBER OF URBAN POPULATION CENTERS. IT IS WELL TO KEEP IN MIND, HOWEVER, THAT EFFORTS TO PROMOTE SIMILAR COOPERATION IN NATIONAL LEVEL (DIET) ELECTIONS HAVE PRODUCED SINGULAR LACK OF SUCCESS. DESPITE VULNERABILITY OF LDP AND SOME REAL ATTEMPTS (ESPECIALLY BY JSP) TO FOSTER JOINT OPPOSITION COOPERATION IN 1974 UPPER HOUSE ELECTION, OPPOSITION JOINT CANDIDATES EMERGED IN ONLY HANDFUL OF PREFECTURES AND THEY ALL LOST. IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES, PERSONAL RIVALRIES AND QUESTIONS OF FINANCE ALL GET IN WAY OF CONFIDENTIAL

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COOPERATION IN DIET CAMPAIGNS. BUT PROBABLY MOST IMPORTANT IS SIMPLE FACT THAT COME ELECTION TIME EACH PARTY SEEKS TO MAXIMIZE ITS OWN DIET SEATS AND CONCERN FOR AGGREGATE OPPOSITION GAINS FALLS BY WAYSIDE. WE THINK THIS SITUATION WILL PERSIST AND CONSISTENT PATTERN OF OPPOSITION COOPERATION IN DIET ELECTIONS WILL NOT APPEAR.

4. LOCAL ELECTIONS: CIRCUMSTANCES OF APRIL UNIFIED LOCAL ELECTIONS INDICATE THAT COOPERATIVE ELECTORAL EFFORTS EVEN AT SUB-NATIONAL LEVEL MAY BE LOSING MOMENTUM. MOST STRIKING WAS JSP-JCP IMBROGLIO OVER HANDLING OF SUBSIDIES TO OUTCASTS WHICH FOR A TIME CALLED INTO QUESTION TOKYO GOVERNOR MINOBE'S THIRD TERM CANDIDACY. ANOTHER SALIENT ELECTION FEATURE WAS JSP-JCP FALLING-

OUT OVER STRUCTURE OF SUPPORT ORGANIZATION FOR OSAKA GOVERNOR KURODA. IN OTHER GUBERNATORIAL AND MAYORAL ELECTIONS, HODGEPODGE OF OPPOSITION COMBINATIONS APPEARED BUT, WITH EXCEPTION OF KANAGAWA PREFECTURE AND FEW CITIES, NOE WAS PARTICULARLY EFFECTIVE. MOREOVER, COMPLAINTS WERE WIDE-SPREAD (AS THEY ALWAYS ARE) THAT, WHATEVER OPPOSITION COMBINATION WAS INVOLVED, PARTNERS CONTRIBUTED LITTLE IN TERMS OF RESOURCES AND PEOPLE AND THAT COOPERATION WAS REALLY ONLY NOMINAL.

5. PART OF REASON FOR LESS THAN ALL-OUT ELECTORAL COOPERATION IS FOUND IN POLICY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PARTY HEADQUARTERS; PART IS FOUND IN FACT THAT IN PLACES WHERE REFORMIST JOINT CANDIDATES HAVE BEEN ELECTED, OPPOSITION PARTIES HAVE FOUND THEMSELVES IN COMPETITION FOR POWER IN LOCAL ADMINISTRATIONS AND FOR INFLUENCE WITH GOVERNOR OR MAYOR (TOKYO, OSAKA, KYOTO, ETC.). IN SHORT, LOCAL ELECTION SUCCESSES HAVE PRODUCED NOT UNITY BUT NEW GROUNDS FOR COMPETITION AND INTER-PARTY SKIRMISHING. AD HOC LOCAL ELECTION COOPERATION WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE, BUT OPPOSITION PROGRESS FROM HERE ON SEEMS LIKELY TO BE LESS IMPRESSIVE AND MAY BE NOT VERY IMPRESSIVE AT ALL.

6. DIET COOPERATION: IF ELECTORAL COOPERATION IS GOING NOWHERE, ARE THERE OTHER AREAS WHERE ANTI-LDP PARTIES CAN COME TOGETHER AND FORGE SOME MEASURE OF UNITY? FROM TIME TO TIME THEY PLEDGE DIET SOLIDARITY, USUALLY IN OPPOSITION TO SPECIFIC LDP PROPOSALS, BUT SUCH SOLIDARITY HAS RARELY LONG CONFIDENTIAL

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ENDURED. ONE OR MORE OF OPPOSITION PARTIES HAVE OFTEN BROKEN RANKS TO SUPPORT OR AT LEAST ACQUIESCE TO LDP PROPOSALS, USUALLY IN EXCHANGE FOR MINOR BILL MODIFICATION OR OTHER LEGISLATIVE TRADE-OFF. A CURRENT EXAMPLE IS LDP ELECTION REDISTRICTING BILL WHICH JSP AND DSP SUPPORT AND KOMEITO AND JCP OPPOSE. DOCTRINAL DIFFERENCES APART, KEY REASON FOR OPPOSITION DISUNITY IN THE DIET IS FELT NEED BY EACH PARTY TO MAINTAIN OWN IDENTITY IN NATIONAL FORUM MUCH IN PUBLIC EYE.

7. MASS MOVEMENTS: NEITHER HAVE MASS MOVEMENTS AND ORGANIZATIONS SERVED AS VEHICLES FOR PROMOTING OPPOSITION UNITY. SO-

CALLED JOINT STRUGGLES HAVE GENERALLY BEEN OF SHORT DURATION, RARELY INCLUDED ALL OPPOSITION PARTIES, OFTEN PRODUCED DISPUTES AND RECRIMINATIONS AND FREQUENTLY HAVE BEEN DOMINATED BY JSP-JCP COMPETITION FOR LEADERSHIP. OPPOSITION TO NUCLEAR TESTING/ WEAPONS, ETC., PROVIDES GOOD EXAMPLE OF INABILITY OF LEFT TO COME TOGETHER IN MASS MOVEMENT WITH CONSIDERABLE POTENTIAL FOR POPULAR APPEAL. DESPITE SEEMING MUTUALITY OF INTEREST ON NUCLEAR QUESTION, JCP, JSP AND DSP EACH BACK SEPARATE ANTI-NUCLEAR GROUP. THUS, DESPITE OCTOBER 1974 CONTROVERSY ARISING FROM LAROCQUE STATEMENTS RE NUCLEAR WEAPONS, OPPOSITION TO

PRESIDENTIAL VISIT LAST NOVEMBER LACKED DSP SUPPORT FROM OUTSET,  
WAS UNDERCUT BY KOMEITO DEFECTION, AND ENDED UP AS JCP SHOW  
WITH HALF-HEARTED JSP PARTICIPATION. THIS OPPOSITION DISARRAY

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NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01

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R 061015Z JUN 75  
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 707V  
INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL  
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI  
AMCONSUL HONG KONG  
USLO PEKING  
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI  
COMUSJAPAN, YOKOTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TOKYO 7575

CONTRIBUTES IMPORTANTLY TO ABSENCE OF LARGE SCALE DEMONSTRATIONS

AGAINST U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE. MANY NOW QUESTION OGHSTION  
PARTY ABILITY EVEN TO MOUNT SUCH LARGE SCALE DEMONSTRATIONS.

8. LABOR: NOR HAS LABOR MOVEMENT PROVIDED BRIDGE LINKING  
OPPOSITION PARTIES. TWO PRIMARY LABOR FEDERATIONS,  
SOHYO AND DOMEI, CONTINUE TO GO THEIR SEPARATE WAYS. WITHIN  
SOHYO, JSP STRUGGLE AGAINST COMMUNIST INCURSIONS GOES FORWARD  
UNABATED, AND IN DOMEI, DSP ALSO WORKS AGAINST SOME PRO-JSP AND  
PRO-JCP ELEMENTS. CERTAINLY THERE IS NO SIGN OF DETENTE--LET  
ALONE ENTENTE--BETWEEN SOHYO AND DOMEI WHICH  
WOULD BE CONDITION PRECEDENT TO ENDURING JSP-DSP COOPERATION.  
MOREOVER, LABOR MOVEMENT, ALREADY PLAGUED BY POLITICAL DIVISION,  
SEEMS LIKELY TO BECOME EVEN MORE DIVIDED BY TENTATIVE KOMEITO  
EFFORTS (WHICH WE ARE NOW STUDYING) TO GAIN SUPPORT BOTH WITHIN  
MAJOR FEDERATIONS AND AMONG UNORGANIZED WORKERS.

9. ABSENCE OF ISSUES: FINALLY, FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES, WHICH  
ONCE EXCITED PUBLIC INTEREST AND PROVIDED A BOND  
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AMONG NOT ONLY OPPOSITION PARTIES THEMSELVES BUT BETWEEN PARTIES AND MEDIA AS WELL, HAVE FADED. RECOGNITION OF CHINA AND INITIATIVES FOR SOVIET PEACE TREATY ARE GONE AS ISSUES--OPPOSITION THUNDER STOLEN BY LDP. END OF U.S. VIETNAM INVOLVEMENT, BASE REDUCTIONS AND DETENTE HAVE MUFFLED OUTCRIES AGAINST U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE IN JAPAN. THESE DEVELOPMENTS HAVE CREATED NEW ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH EARLIER FREQUENT NEAR-UNANIMITY OF OPPOSITION MEDIA VIEWS HAVE GIVEN WAY TO FRAGMENTATION OF OPPOSITION VIEWS ON DEFENSE, RELATIONS WITH CHINA AND RUSSIA, AND OTHER ISSUES. RECALL FOR EXAMPLE, CURRENT PRESS AND PARTY CRITICISM OF JSP CHAIRMAN NAKATA'S ENDORSEMENT OF CHINESE OPPOSITION TO THREAT OF SOVIET "HEGEMONY".

10. ALL OF THIS LEADS US TO CONCLUSION THAT OPPOSITION PARTIES CANNOT FORGE COMMON FRONT, SPECIFICALLY ELECTORAL COMMON FRONT, TO CHALLENGE LDP. WE THINK THAT CONSERVATIVES WILL CONTINUE TO ENJOY BENEFIT OF DIVIDED OPPOSITION FOR FORESEEABLE FUTURE. THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT LDP COULD NOT EVENTUALLY LOSE ITS PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY, BUT SIMPLY THAT SUCH LOSS WOULD MORE LIKELY RESULT FROM WIDENING PUBLIC DISSATISFACTION WITH CONSERVATIVE RULE THAN FROM TACTICAL STRENGTH OR POPULAR APPEAL GENERATED BY UNIFIED OPPOSITION. MOREOVER, EVEN THIS TURN OF EVENTS DOES NOT SEEM LIKELY IN NEAR FUTURE. DESPITE CURRENT ADVERSE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AND CRITICISM OF LDP OPERATING STYLE, ESPECIALLY UNDER TANAKA, CONSERVATIVES HAVE PRETTY WELL HELD THEIR OWN IN RECENT LOCAL ELECTIONS, LEADING SOME OBSERVERS TO CONCLUDE THAT THEY HAVE CHECKED MOMENTUM OF THEIR ELECTORAL DECLINE. FINALLY, FOR LDP TO LOSE CONTROL OF LOWER HOUSE WOULD REQUIRE THAT PARTY DROP 30 SEATS IN NEXT GENERAL ELECTION. NO ONE WE HAVE TALKED TO EXPECTS THAT TO HAPPEN; ON THE CONTRARY, FORECASTS RANGE FROM POSSIBLE LOSS OF 4-6 SEATS TO GAIN OF 20 PLUS SEATS. IN SUM, LDP RULE SEEMS CERTAIN FOR NEXT 3 OR 4 YEARS AND IN OUR VIEW BEYOND THAT.

11. BUT WHAT IF PREDICTIONS ARE WRONG AND VZDP DOES LOSE MAJORITY? COULD OPPOSITION PARTIES THEN FORM COALITION GOVERNMENT? WE THINK NOT. HOSTILITY TOWARD AND FEAR OF COMMUNISTS IS SIMPLY TOO DEEP-ROOTED TO PERMIT EITHER KOMEI TO OR DSP TO ENTER COMBINATION WITH JCP--PROBABLY EVEN WITH LEFT-DOMINATED JSP. ADDITIONALLY, DESIRE OF EACH PARTY TO PRESERVE IDENTITY AND PLAY "KEY" GOVERNMENTAL ROLE, COMBINED WITH QUESTIONS OF CONFIDENTIAL

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TION OF ASSIGNING LEADERSHIP POSTS, APPEAR TO POSE SERIOUS PROBLEMS. THIS COULD CONCEIVABLY PRODUCE DANGEROUS SITUATION WHERE NO ONE COULD FORM GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL SITUATION WOULD BE ONE OF IMMOBILITY. MORE LIKELY RESULT, HOWEVER, WOULD BE THAT LDP WOULD FORM COALITION OR WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH DSP, KOMEI TO, AND RIGHT FRINGE OF JSP, THEREBY ASSURING CONTINUED CONSERVATIVE DOMINANCE OF JAPANESE GOVERNMENT.

12. OUR IMPRESSION IS THAT OPPOSITION UNITY IS WILL-OF-THE-  
WISP AND THAT THERE IS LITTLE LIKELIHOOD OF OPPOSITION COALI-  
TION GOVERNMENT IN NEXT FEW YEARS, AND PROBABLY BEYOND.  
BECAUSE WE DO NOT BELIEVE IT LIKELY THAT OPPOSITION  
PARTIES CAN CAPTURE CONTROL OF GOVERNMENT, WE DO NOT EXPECT  
ANY SHARP CHANGE IN NATURE OF U.S.-JAPAN RELATIONS IN NEAR FUTURE  
STEMMING FROM SHIFTS IN DOMESTIC POWER BALANCE. FURTHER DECLINE  
OR LOSS OF PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY, HOWEVER, MIGHT FORCE LDP TO  
BE SOMEWHAT MORE RESPONSIVE TO OPPOSITION PARTY PRESSURES FOR  
GREATER "INDEPENDENCE" FROM U.S. BUT THIS WILL BE ONLY ONE--  
AND NOT NECESSARILY MOST IMPORTANT--FACTOR AMONG MANY WHICH  
WILL SHAPE U.S.-JAPANESE TIES DURING NEXT FEW YEARS.  
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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 26 AUG 1999  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** COALITION GOVERNMENT, POLITICAL STABILITY, ELECTIONS, PARTY DISSENSION  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 06 JUN 1975  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** johnsorg  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1975TOKYO07575  
**Document Source:** ADS  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** 11652 GDS  
**Errors:** n/a  
**Film Number:** D750198-1113  
**From:** TOKYO  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**Line Count:** 286  
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**Office:** ACTION EA  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 6  
**Previous Channel Indicators:**  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** johnsorg  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 23 APR 2003  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <23 APR 2003 by GarlanWA>; APPROVED <17 NOV 2003 by johnsorg>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
06 JUL 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** n/a  
**TAGS:** PFOR, PINT, JA, LDP  
**To:** STATE INFO SEOUL  
TAIPEI  
HONG KONG  
PEKING  
:CINCPAC HONOLULU HI  
COMUSJAPAN, YOKOTA

**Type:** TE

**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006